GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:17
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2015
Shrinking Green Area
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ambit of green area has been shrinking due to increase in urbanisation and construction of residential and commercial buildings in the country;
(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
(c) whether the Government has any policy/scheme or is considering such a policyscheme to save the trees and green area from rapid increase of urbanisation and construction work and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) &(b) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun is carrying out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report. India State of Forest Report 2013 is the latest in the series. As per India State of Forest Report-2013, there is an overall net increase of 5871 square kilometers in the forest cover of the country as compared with India State of Forest Report-2011. The details showing forest cover and change in forest cover in States/UTs wise is given in Annexure.
(c) The management and protection of forest area is primarily the responsibility of concerned State/UT Governments. However, there are Central Acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and State Acts/Rules to deal with issues related to protection and management of forest areas. Under Indian Forest Act, 1927 and State Specific Tree Preservation Act, felling of trees without permission from Competent Authority is a punishable offence. Use of forest land for non-forest purpose require prior approval of Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

As per the Landuse Classification in Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementations (URDPFI) Guidelines, 2014, forests are normally covered under "Recreational" use. For prescribing norms, forests are classified under "Open Spaces" whereas Parks/Playgrounds are classified as "Organized Green". In order to conserve and protect the forests in and around the cities and towns, the State Governments need to adhere to the Norms prescribed in the URDPFI Guidelines, 2014.
Further, afforestation in the country is taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Bamboo Mission (NBM) and under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), 13thFinance Commission Grant, different State Plan/ Non- Plan Schemes including externally aided projects. National Afforestation Programme (NAP) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Afforestation and tree plantation and eco-restoration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country. The Scheme is being implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at Village levels.

The Ministry also provides Grants-in-aid to State Governments to supplement the efforts of the States for forest management and protection. Funds are being provided under Intensification Forest Management Scheme (IFMS). These funds are utilized for patrolling of the forests,establishment of camps, building fire watch towers, creation and maintenance of fire lines, forest fire control, survey and demarcation of forest areas and strengthening forest infrastructure.